

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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R 011117Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9876
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
UDKRP/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 4543
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - L A S T L I N E

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR, CH, PBOR
SUBJECT: MAJOR PRAVDA ARTICLE ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 5333, (B) MOSCOW 5675

SUMMARY: MAJOR PRAVDA ARTICLE, COINCIDING WITH BREZHNEV'S VISIT TO SIBERIA, DEFENDS SOVIET POSITION IN SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE. END SUMMARY.

1. ASSUME DEPT. HAS SUMMARY TASS OR FBIS TEXT OF APRIL 1 PRAVDA AUTHORITATIVE UNSIGNED ARTICLE ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS ENTITLED "REALITY AND FABRICATIONS." FOLLOWING POINTS STRIKE US AS MOST SIGNIFICANT:

-- IT IS SPECIFICALLY A REACTION TO THE MARCH 26 PEOPLES' DAILY PRESENTATION OF CHINESE POSITION ON THE BORDER IN CONJUNCTION WITH PRC REJECTION OF SUPREME SOVIET MESSAGE. MORE GENERALLY, IT IS ANOTHER MAJOR ELEMENT IN THE RECENT SOVIET PROPAGANDA EFFORT THAT BEGAN WITH PUBLICATION OF THE SUPREME SOVIET MESSAGE. THE EFFORT IS AIMED AT PORTRAYING THE SOVIETS AS STRIVING TO REACH AGREEMENT WITH PRC ON THE BORDER AND OTHER PROBLEMS AND THE CHINESE AS MAINTAINING INTRANSIGENT AND UNREASONABLE POSITIONS.

-- IN "DOCUMENTING" SOVIET REASONABLENESS AND CHINESE INTRANSIGENCE THIS ARTICLE DRAWS TOGETHER MOSTLY OLD AND SOME NEW INFORMATION ON THE BORDER NEGOTIATIONS. THIS IS NOT UNLIKE THE RECENT SOVIET PUBLICATION OF THE SOVIET PROPOSED SOVIET-JAPANESE GOOD
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NEIGHBOR TREATY. IN EFFECT, MOSCOW IS LAYING OUT ITS CASE IN COMPREHENSIVE FORM BEFORE THE SOVIET PUBLIC AND A FOREIGN AUDIENCE, AND USING THE PRC RIPOSTE TO ITS FEB. 24 SUPREME SOVIET "INITIATIVE" AS THE IMMEDIATE PRETEXT.

-- THE ARTICLE'S TIMING IS CLEARLY PEGGED TO THE BREZHNEV TRIP TO SIBERIA AND THE FAR EAST. WE EXPECT BREZHNEV TO USE THE OCCASION OF HIS TRIP TO SPEAK OUT ON SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS, AND IN DOING SO, TO REINFORCE THE SOVIET POSITIONS AND ANTI-CHINESE CHARGES CONTAINED IN THE ARTICLE.

-- THE ARTICLE SUGGESTS NOTHING NEW IN THE SOVIET BORDER POSITION, DESPITE WHAT APPEARS TO US TO BE PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED DATA (E.G., FEB. 11, 1970 DRAFT SOVIET AGREEMENT ON THE PRESERVATION OF THE STATUS QUO ON THE BORDER). LIKE THE SUPREME SOVIET MESSAGE, WE EXPECT SOVIET, EE, MONGOLIAN AND OTHER PRO-SOVIET PROPAGANDA ORGANS TO DRAW HEAVILY ON THE ARTICLE IN DEFENDING THE SOVIET POSITION ON THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE. HOWEVER, THE ARTICLE ITSELF PRESENTS ALL

THE OLD SOVIET POSITIONS AND CHARGES THAT HAVE BEEN
PRESENTED BY THE SOVIET UNION IN THE PAST. IN SUM,
THESE AMOUNT TO A REJECTION OF CHINESE DEMAND THAT
SOVIETS RECOGNIZE AND THEN WITHDRAW SOVIET FORCES FROM
"DISPUTED AREAS" AS PRELIMINARY CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. THE SOVIET POSITION IS RECONFIRMED BY THE
ARTICLE'S CONTENTION THAT PAST "RUSSIAN-CHINESE TREATY
DOCUMENTS" CONSTITUTE THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE "EXISTING
BORDER LINE." THESE DOCUMENTS, IT ARGUES, NOT THE
CHINESE DEMANDED "AGREEMENT ABOUT SO-CALLED TEMPORARY
MEASURES," INCLUDING ACCEPTANCE OF "DISPUTED AREAS,"
SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR NEGOTIATIONS. IN THIS
CONNECTION ARTICLE HOLDS THAT "THE MAIN TASK

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OF THE NEGOTIATIONS" IS "SPECIFYING THE PASSAGE OF THE
BORDER LINE IN INDIVIDUAL SECTORS" ON THE BASIS OF
PREVIOUS TREATIES.

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2. SEVERAL MORE SPECIFIC ELEMENTS IN THE ARTICLE THAT
DESERVE NOTE ARE:

-- THE REFERENCE TO THE CHINESE DEMAND (MADE BY HUA
AT THE RECENT NPC MEETING) FOR TOTAL SOVIET TROOP
WITHDRAWAL FROM MONGOLIA, AS WELL AS A TROOP PULLBACK
FROM THE SINO-SOVIET BORDER. ARTICLE HOLDS THAT A
SOVIET TROOP PULLBACK FROM DISPUTED AREAS WOULD, IN FACT,
BE UNILATERAL SINCE THE DISPUTED AREAS ARE IN THE
USSR. SUCH PULLBACK WOULD LEAVE THE SOVIET POPULATION
"UNPROTECTED" AND GIVE THE CHINESE THE OPPORTUNITY
"TO DEVELOP" THESE AREAS.

-- THE DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM ON DETERMINING THE
"STATUS QUO" TO WHICH BOTH SIDES MUST REVERT FOR THE
BORDER NEGOTIATIONS TO PROGRESS. ARTICLE VIEWS "STATUS
QUO" IN SOVIET EYES AS "PRESERVATION OF THE PRESENT
BORDER" BASICALLY ALONG THE LINES OF PAST TREATIES.
THE ARTICLE CLAIMS THE PRC IS ATTEMPTING TO LINK
DETERMINATION OF THE "STATUS QUO" WITH "THE RECARVING
OF THE HISTORICALLY SHAPED BORDER."

3. IN MARCH 30 CONVERSATION WITH JAPANESE DIPLOMAT
HERE, MFA CHINA SPECIALIST I. KUBASOV REITERATED
ARTICLE'S CRITICISM OF CHINESE DEMANDS FOR "PRE-CONDI-
TIONS" ON THE BORDER NEGOTIATIONS. HE STATED THAT IN
DEMANDING "PRE-CONDITIONS," CHINA IS DEPARTING FROM
THE BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT SHE FOLLOWS IN HER
RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES. THE SOVIET UNION, HE
CONTENDED, DOES NOT CARE WHAT CHINA HAS IN MIND FOR
"PRE-CONDITIONS" SINCE MOSCOW CANNOT ACCEPT ANY
"PRE-CONDITIONS" IN ITS RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.
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4. KUBASOV ALSO REJECTED THE CHINESE DEMAND FOR A

TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM MONGOLIA AS "UNREASONABLE."
HE STATED THAT THE SOVIET UNION MAINTAINS ITS ARMED
FORCES IN MONGOLIA AS A PART OF ITS TREATY OBLIGATIONS
WITH THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF MONGOLIA. CHINA, HE
SAID, IS NOT IN A POSITION TO COMMENT ON THIS. TOON

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